A Model For Change in Religious Organizations

Chaplain (MAJ) John P. Kohl, USAR

Are military chapel programs more like a buggy whip factory or a McDonalds'? This article will seek to provide some answers to that question, and to challenge readers to develop a "plan" to improve the effectiveness of our ministries.

The Army chaplaincy has had an on-going relationship with organization development since 1970,[1] and despite the widespread use of terms such as "OD" or "OE", it is important to remember that definitionally:

> Organization development is an effort (1) planned, (2) organization-wide, and
> (3) managed from the top to (4) increase organization effectiveness and health
> through (5) planned interventions in the organization's 'processes', using be-
> havioral science knowledge.[2]

---

[1] Cyril R. Mill, "OD In a Macrosystem: A Three-Year Progress Report," in New Technologies in Organization Development: 2, edited by John D. Adams (La Jolla, CA.: University Associates, Inc., 1975), pp. 314-330.

[2] Richard Beckhard, Organization Development: Strategies and Models (Reading, Mass.: Addison Wesley Publishing Company, 1973), p. 9.

Chaplain Kohl is a minister in the United Church of Christ, and served on active duty from 1973-1978. He received his PhD in Business Administration from Penn State, and is Associate Professor of Business at San Jose State University, California.

Frequently the emphasis has been placed on the final portions of this definition, and consequently we may miss possibilities for other types of planned change. In this article we will discuss a model from the management literature which ~~she~~ has wide applicability to religious organizations, and which can assist us in evaluating and positively changing aspects of our ministries. We will first, however, consider "OD" within the broader perspective of many types of _planned_ change.

Blake and Mouton's D/D Matrix[3]

Most readers are familiar with Blake and Mouton's "Managerial Grid" in which leadership styles are identified as autocratic, participative or laissez faire. That Grid is the basis for the "T-P (Task-People) Questionnaire" which has been frequently utilized in PET/MET workshops.

Blake and Mouton ~~she~~ have also developed a "D/D Matrix" (Diagnosis/Development) in which they categorize interventions aimed at effecting planned changes in organizations. The horizontal axis lists the settings in which changes occur, while the vertical axis includes methods frequently utilized to effect such changes. For example, a Division Chaplains' Training Conference aimed at providing an opportunity to ventilate feelings is an example of Cell B (cathartic intervention at a team level).

---

[3] Robert R. Blake and Jane S. Mouton, "The D/D Matrix," in _New Technologies in Organization Development,_ op. cit., pp. 3-36.

As can be observed, other possibilities for change also exist. In fact, Transactional Analysis is an example of the fifth level (Principles, Models and Theories) which has been widely used for change in individuals and groups. In general, however, much of what unit chaplains have encountered in regard to OD can be found in the first three levels. As with all generalizations there are obvious exceptions, and this comment is simply an observation -- not a criticism.

This article seeks to emphasize the importance which "Principles, theories and models" can play in aiding us in effective ministry:

> In the final analysis, however, catharsis, catalysis, confrontation or pres-
> cription constitute means to an end, rather than ends in themselves. The
> ultimate goal is that people become capable of effective living through util-
> izing sound principles, theories and models as the basis of human enrichment.[4]

The remainder of this article will present such a model which is applicable for analysis and change of religious organizations. Although this model was originally developed to categorize business firms, it is equally applicable to churches and chaplaincy programs. We will first briefly review the terms which Miles and Snow have developed to describe and categorize organizations.

The Miles and Snow Typology[5]

These two authors have found that business firms can be classified as having three distinct strategies (defenders, prospectors, and analyzers), or one "non-strategy" (reactors). Figure 1

---

[4] Ibid., p. 33.

[5] Raymond E. Miles and Charles C. Snow, _Organizational Strategy, Structure and Process_ (New York: McGraw Hill, Inc., 1978).

summarizes major problems confronting such firms, and the solutions which they adopt in

---------- ---------

Insert Figure 1 About Here

----

order to properly align themselves with their particular environments, and therefore achieve greater organizational "success."

Defenders emphasize a single core technology, and emphasize the development of a single or limited line of products or services in the most efficient manner. Typically a business firm which adopts a defender strategy will control a large share of the market or submarket.

This strategy can be very successful in a stable environment where little change takes place. Perhaps the best example of a classic defender is McDonalds'. In the past, McDonalds produced a quality product at a low price and aimed its appeal to children and teenagers. For years billions of 39 cent (or less) hamburgers were sold. In fact, that strategy was so successful that in a 1975 survey, Ronald McDonald was the best known person next to Santa Claus to children. The plastic drive-ins were successful for this strategy as long as the environment remained the same.

In the past decade, however, changes began to occur. Two gas crunches changed America's driving habits, breakfast became the single most popular meal, the number of teenagers and children began to shrink, and competitors entered the marketplace with hamburgers, chicken, pizza, and a variety of products which directly competed with McDonalds. Had McDonalds stayed with a pure defender strategy of drive-ins with a single product for younger Americans, the

TYPE	PROBLEMS	SOLUTIONS
DEFENDER	1. How to "seal off" a portion of the total market to create a stable set of products/customers	1. Narrow and stable domain 2. Excellent customer service 3. Ignore outside developments
	2. Efficient production of goods or services	1. Cost-efficient technology 2. Single core technology
PROSPECTOR	1. How to locate and exploit new product and new market opportunities	1. Monitors wide range of envvironmental conditions 2. Creates change in the industry 3. Growth may occur in spurts through new products and markets
	2. How to avoid long term commitments to a single technological process	1. Multiple technologies 2. Flexible technologies 3. Low degree of "routinization"
ANALYZER	1. How to locate and exploit new product and market opportunities while simultaneously maintaining a firm base of traditional products and customers	1. Hybrid domain that is both stable and changing 2. Surveillance mechanisms mostly limited to marketing
	2. How to be efficient in stable domains and flexible in changing portions	1. Dual technological core (both stable and flexible) 2. Moderate degree of efficiency

FIGURE 1

MILES AND SNOW'S TYPOLOGIES

(Adapted and modified from pp. 48, 66, and 79 in Miles and Snow, op. cit. Readers are referred to the original for a complete listing and discussion of organizational types and characteristics).

firm would have gone the way of the buggy whip factory. As we will see later, McDonalds' strategy did change and in so doing, the organization has been able to remain a leader in its field.

Prospectors emphasize effectiveness over efficiency. As Peter Drucker once noted, "Efficiency is doing things right. Effectiveness is doing the right things." In the 1920's, Ford Motor Company's first assembly line was able to produce cars in the most efficient manner of any car producer. Henry Ford was said to have stated: "You can have any car you want -- so long as it is a black model T." GM came up with a new idea: a car for any pocket book, and in any color you desired. Ford was efficient, and GM was to prove to be effective.

For prospectors, right choices take precedence over efficiency, and such strategies are most effective when environments are rapidly changing. For example, firms in high technology find a prospector strategy more appropriate than that of a defender. In these areas, innovation is the byword, and success lies in constantly being able to develop, introduce, and successfully market new products. In such environments a firm would not want to commit itself to a single product or a single product line, nor would it want to spend its efforts on trying to find the most efficient way to manufacture that single product.

Imagine the disastrous consequences if the developer of PONG had stuck with only that product and had sought to corner the market with efficient production techniques. Such a defender strategy in a high tecnology environment would have inevitably resulted in bankruptcy today. The video game market is so turbulent that success requires new games on a continuing basis. Right choices dictate the need for a prospector strategy and only right choices can assure success.

Analyzers are the third classification, and combine the best aspects of both defenders and prospectors. In general, they are organizations which possess a highly efficient technical core, but also prospect for new opportunities. The McDonalds example provides an illustration of the classic defender which appears to be successfully moving into an analyzer strategy. In recent years we have seen the golden arches appear downtown, in malls, and even atop office buildings. Menus have been expanded beyond hamburgers to include non-beef products, and a breakfast line has been introduced. The firm has even begun to experiment with a health food line (yogurt shakes, anyone?).

McDonalds' will never lose the high quality hamburger and shake at a reasonable price which we came to know and love as kids. However, it would appear safe to predict that in order to continue to avoid the buggy whip factory syndrome that even more changes will occur in order to accomodate changing customer demand and the products and services of competitors. This is the nature of the true analyzer: maintaining the efficient single core technology of service or product, but prospecting for new areas into which to expand.

Reactors are organizations with no identifiable strategy. Frequently they are displaced defenders that have been forced out of their highly efficient niche through some change in the environment. Such could have been the case with McDonalds', but wasn't. It was the case in the example of buggy whip factories with the advent of the automobile. In sum, whenever a defender needs to change but cannot or will not, they become reactors. The end result for business firms is organizational failure and probable bankruptcy.

A number of cautions are in order regarding these descriptions from Miles and Snow. First, the above summaries are only summaries. They are not complete, nor could they be. Readers

are encouraged to refer to the original source for a complete explanation of all aspects of these strategies, and their effectiveness in different situations. This article has simply sought to highlight those definitions which are applicable to religious organizations as well as business firms.

Second, no single type can be said to be "best". As we have seen, it is important to match the organization's strategy with the environment in which it finds itself. Hence, organizational leaders have an obligation to understand the external environment and to develop a strategy which best fits a particular situation. What is true for business firms is equally true for religious ones.

Third, these categories provide a model for understanding the specific strategies or organizations. They also do more. They provide an opportunity to bring about planned change. The reason for devoting so much time in this article to describing these four types was not only to encourage chaplains to analyze and understand their chapel programs, but to encourage planned change for inappropriate strategies where they exist.

The actual process by which planned change can be brought about is depicted in Figure 2.

Insert Figure 2 About Here

As can be observed, the first step in the process is for chaplains and/or parish councils to ask and answer the question: "what are we?" or "which type of strategy best describes our present chapel program?" Hopefully, as we have worked through the Miles and Snow typology, readers have already begun to identify whether their current strategies are best described as defender, analyzer, prospector -- or reactor.
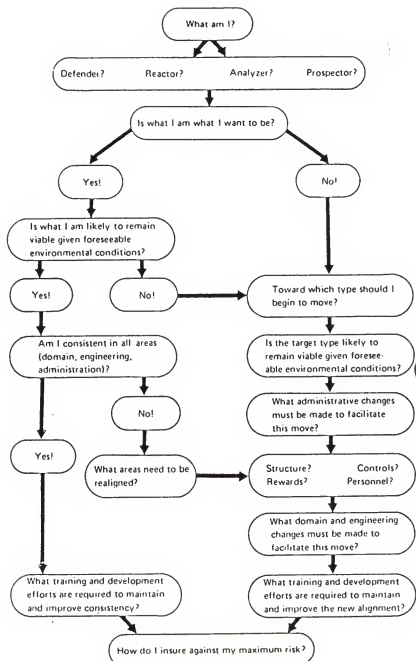
Figure 7-1 Diagnostic checklist.

FIGURE 2
MILES AND SNOW'S DIAGNOSTIC CHECKLIST

(Adapted from Miles and Snow, op. cit., p. 109)

Simply identifying what we are <u>now</u>, however, is only the first step in developing an effective parish program. The second question which must be answered is: "Is this really what we <u>want</u> to be?" It may well be that a strategy which was effective elsewhere or at some other time in the past is no longer appropriate. The environments in which we operate may have changed, or our people may have changed, dictating the need for a different, more appropriate approach to chapel programming. It may also (unfortunately) be true that we have <u>no</u> strategy, and that we are simply reactors, making it imperative that we do change in order to accomplish effective ministry.

In those situations where planned change is appropriate or necessary, a third question must also be raised: "What should we become?" Any new strategy must be workable, and any plan of action dictated by that strategy must hold the promise of effectiveness. As we look at both our present and our future, we must ask if the new strategy is likely to prove to be a viable alternative. If the answer is "yes," then that understanding must be adopted to your local situation, and used to revise plans, programs and priorities in order to meet the needs of your religious ministry.

In sum, if this process of analysis reveals that indeed you have become stuck with a buggy whip factory, take action to change. The Miles and Snow typology which has been presented in this article provides one model for chaplains and laypersons to use as a prescription for planned, organizational change.

The question may still remain in some readers' minds: how does such change take place? In the remainder of this article we will briefly describe an example of the application of this typology and the process utilized in a civilian parish. The techniques and steps utilized are equally applicable for parish councils, brigade level chapel programs, joint ministries, and higher level programming.

A Parish Example

While working on my degree at Penn State, I served as interim pastor for 20 months in a church of approximately 160 members. The congregation was typical of many parishes: small, rural in background, and old. In fact, the church records indicated that in the past quarter century the mebership had not changed in numbers or financial giving (adjusted for inflation). The only difference which existed between 1955 and 1980 was that the 160 members of the church were 25 years older than they had been!

During that quarter century parish facilities had deteriorated through neglect, and programming had dwindled to a minimum. In seeking to aid the pastoral search committee, I suggested the use of a congregational survey aimed at determining (1) desired levels of programming, (2) characteristics sought in a new pastor, and (3) "critical incidents" (both negative and positive) remembered by members of the church regarding the church's history. I assisted in tabulating the results and "grouping" the critical incidents in order to gain a clearer understanding of where the church had been and where it was at the present time. Most importantly, however, the question which needed to be raised and answered was: "where did the church want to be?"

In a series of meetings with the governing body, we discussed the results and interpretations of that survey. In addition, a modified version of the Miles and Snow typology was presented to the board, and members were asked to respond to where the church had been, where it was, and where they wanted to the church to be in the future.

Numerous meetings of the consistory resulted in a deepening awareness of what had happened in the life of the church. This parish had been a typical defender, only to see the community change from that of a small rural town to a major university community. In spite of these changes in the environment, the church had tried to remain the same, but was unsuccessful.

Programs which had been successful in the past were no longer adequate for the present. In Miles and Snow's terminology, the defender had been unable to cope with a changing environment, and had become a reactor. As a result of these many discussions with the church leadership, a number of decisions were made, all of which focused on moving the church into the role of analyzer.

First, criteria sought in a new full-time pastor became more clearly focused. An individual was sought who possessed a balance between pastoral skills and cooperative evangelism with other parishes in the area. This balance was necessary in order to, secondly, develop programs which were both internally and externally oriented. Finally, a rennovation program was planned, funded, and begun in May, 1983, in order to assure institutional preservation for the next 100 years.

What has been described may not appear significantly different from what other parishes or chapels may seek to do. The difference, however, lies in the increased understanding of the members and congregational leadership: the process of change and increased organizational effectiveness was based on a model which provided a clear understanding of where they had been, what they had become, and where they wanted to be. More importantly, that model provided the means to engage in concrete p lanning in order to bring about those desired changes.

This article has sought to suggest that as religious professionals we too have an obligation to analyze, understand, and when necessary, change our activities, programs, and ministries. This typology from the management literature has been presented as one mans of enabling us to effectively bring about such planned changes.

Summary

In conclusion, a number of points regarding "OD" and this model are in order. First, as Blake and Mouton have noted, models are powerful tools to assist in bringing about change. This article has sought to provide a starting point for chaplains who wish to analyze and understand what their chapel programs are accomplishing.

Second, the emphasis throughout this discussion has been on the process of understanding and change. No attempt has been made to prescribe one particular strategic type as most appropriate. In the parish example, the analyzer mode was, in my opinion, the most approrpriate. However, in other situations a defender or prospector strategy may be a more suitable and viable alternative. I have emphasized the need to understand where we are, individually, and then to creatively design a strategy around a proper "fit" with our environment.

Third, having analyzed and understood those things you and/or the parish council deem appropriate to change, the model provides a mandate for planned change. As a model, such planning is both a by-product and necessary means by which "OD" or "OE" can truly aid our ministries at all levels of the Army chaplaincy.

We return to the question raised at the beginning of this article -- is your chapel program more like a buggy whip factory or a McDonalds'? I hope that this discussion has provided a framework within which you can analyze and positively change those programs you deem necessary. That decision is the starting point for determining whether or not we will be able to equip ourselves for continuing ministry in the decades ahead.